

REMARKS

Claims 1-33 and 35 are now pending in the present application. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. The allowability of claims 4, 5, 17, 21 and 33 is gratefully acknowledged.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102:

Claims 1, 3, 6-13, 15, 16, 18, 20 and 22-32 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Chase, U.S. Patent No. 5,636,906. Claim 1 defines a composite wheel that includes, among other things, a wheel having a centrally-located hub aperture, and a wheel cladding including at least one alignment tab extending from an inner surface for engaging the hub aperture and aligning the cladding with respect to the hub aperture, and at least one support post extending from the inner surface substantially proximate the hub aperture and structurally supporting the wheel cladding with respect to the wheel. Chase '906 in no way discloses at least one support post extending from an inner surface of a wheel cladding proximate a wheel hub of a wheel. Therefore, Chase '906 cannot anticipate that which is defined in claim 1.

Moreover, Chase does not teach, motivate or suggest that which is defined in claim 1. Specifically, as clearly illustrated in Fig. 3 of the '906 patent, each boss 48 is located midway between the inner and outer radial edges of the associated overlay. Merriam-Webster Dictionary, ©2005, defines "proximate" as immediately preceding or following or very near. The bosses as disclosed in the Chase '906 patent are by no means proximate a hub aperture of a wheel.

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Accordingly, claim 1 is in condition for allowance. Claims 2-9 are dependent from claim 1 which is in condition for allowance, and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

Independent claims 18, 26 and 28 each define a wheel cladding that includes at least one support post extending from an inner surface of the wheel cladding substantially proximate a hub aperture, and are therefore also in condition for allowance in light of those reasons as noted above with respect to claim 1. Claims 19-25, 27 and 29-33, are dependent from independent claims 10, 26 and 28, respectively, which are in condition for allowance as noted above, and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

Independent claim 10, as amended, defines a wheel cladding assembly that includes, among other things, a body member having an exposed outer surface, an inner surface, and a plurality of circumferentially-spaced lug apertures, and including at least one alignment tab extending from the inner surface and located radially inward of the lug apertures for engaging a hub aperture centrally located within a wheel. The Chase '906 reference does not anticipate, teach, motivate or suggest an alignment tab located radially inward of a plurality of lug apertures. Accordingly, claim 10 is in condition for allowance. Claims 11-17 depend from claim 10 which is in condition for allowance, and are therefore also in condition for allowance.

Newly added claim 35 defines a composite wheel that comprises, among other things, a wheel cladding including at least one alignment tab extending from an inner surface for engaging a hub aperture of a wheel and aligning the cladding with respect to

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the hub aperture, and at least one support post extending from the inner surface substantially proximate the hub aperture to structurally support the wheel cladding with respect to the wheel from axially directed loads applied to the wheel cladding substantially adjacent the hub aperture during wheel balancing. As is known in the art, one of the steps conducted in balancing a wheel includes clamping the wheel very near the hub aperture thereof by placing a conically-shaped wedge within the hub aperture and applying an axially directed load onto the wheel assembly. Deflection of the associated wheel cladding is thereby prevented by providing at least one support post substantially proximate the hub aperture of the wheel.

Accordingly, claims 1-33 and 35 are in condition for allowance and a Notice of Allowability is earnest solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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